

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-38 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-38 have been rejected. By the above amendments, claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-38 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1-3, 11-13, 21-23, and 31-33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,098,066 issued to Snow et al. (hereafter "Snow").

Snow teaches formatting a searchable database into a tree structure of directories. Each directory includes a document vector for each document within the directory. Each document vector is created by splitting the document into terms and associating a weight to each term based on the frequency with which the term is found in the document. In other words, each document is tagged with a list of terms, and their weights, found within the document. The tags are subsequently searched during keyword searches. Snow then performs an adapted version of a keyword search. More specifically, Snow teaches categorizing documents, and then performing a keyword search by first specifying the category in which the keyword search is to be performed and then performing the keyword search within that category.

Within the Office Action, it is stated that the Applicant argues that Snow fails to disclose the limitation of searching documents for specific values of predetermined parameters. It is also stated that the Applicant does not claim this limitation in the independent claims, but instead the Applicant claims this limitation in claim 3. It is further stated that Snow teaches the claim language of claim 3 by selecting one method of search such as keyword search. The Applicant contends that performing a parametric search is just one aspect claimed within the independent claims of the present application related to categorizing individual data items according to one or more navigation paths through a directory tree structure and by one or more "set" parameters.

Setting a parameter refers to defining a specific value for a parameter. Each parameter defines a generic field (parameter field) to which a specific value corresponding to the discrete data item is associated. For example, at a "real estate" node, a parameter field name can be "number of rooms" or "price". The parameter field name is different than the actual value eventually associated with the parameter field name in relation to a specific data item. Continuing the example, homes for sale may be described in property fliers. A generic property

flier can include many parameters used to describe the home for sale, where each parameter is identified by its parameter field name. The generic property flier can include parameters with parameter field names such as “number of bedrooms”, “number of bathrooms”, “square footage”, “address”, and “price”. A particular data item associated with the real estate node can be a property flier for a specific three bedroom home for sale. The parameter with parameter field name “number of bedrooms” has a value of “3”, in this case, and so on for each of the parameters associated with the property flier. In this manner, it is clear that the value of each parameter, which is specific to a particular data item, is different than the parameter field name of each parameter, which generically defines the type of the parameter. Defining a parameter and a corresponding value of the parameter is commonly referred to as setting a parameter, and the association of the parameter and the particular value is referred to as an attribute-value pair.

By the above amendments, the independent claims have been amended to clarify that each data item within the directory structure is categorized by one or more navigation paths through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, where each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter.

As discussed above, Snow teaches tagging a document with terms found within the document, thereby forming a document vector that lists the tagged terms in an index. During a subsequent keyword search, the document vector is searched to match the keywords selected for the search to the index of terms defined by the document vector. First, Snow does not teach organizing and categorizing data items according to a specific node, as defined by a navigation path through the directory tree structure, and by one or more set parameters, where set parameters refers to setting a parameter to a specific value associated with the data item. Second, Snow does not teach accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string.

Each of the items one and two above, are explicitly claimed within the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31. Snow does not teach such limitations. Snow is not designed to determine and tag documents according to their attribute-value pairs (parameter field names and their values), and to then search for documents according to specified values of predetermined parameters, as in set parameters. Further, Snow does not teach accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string. Snow teaches searching a database according to a user query, where the user query comprises a number of documents desired and one or more search items, and may include a user selected category (Snow, col. 8, lines 4-7). A query is not the same as a query string. The user query of Snow is nothing more than the search parameters used in the keyword search process described above. In contrast, a query string as claimed in the

present invention is described as a specific query language to navigate through the directory tree structure to access a specific node or a discrete data item within the directory (Specification, page 30, lines 26-27). The structure of the query language of the present invention is preferably similar to that of SQL (structured query language), but it is specific to the combined technologies of accessing the directory tree structure and setting parameters for a search (Specification, page 31, lines 6-8). Further, the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 of the present application claim a query string, where the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. Clearly, the query string of the present invention defines the results of a search process, that is the specific node defined by its path through the directory tree structure. The user query of Snow defines search parameters to be used in a subsequent keyword search.

On page 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that Snow teaches “users access the directory by a query” and that this is the same as the claimed limitation “accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string”. As discussed above, a query and a query string are not the same. As such, Snow does not teach accessing a node using a query string, as claimed within the present application.

Amended independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within an electronic system. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Snow does not teach organizing and categorizing data items according to a specific node, as defined by a navigation path through the directory tree structure, and by one or more set parameters. Further, Snow does not teach using a query string to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 2 and 3 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 2 and 3 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 11 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 11 comprises means for formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and means for accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Snow does not teach organizing and categorizing data items according to a specific node, as defined by a navigation path through the directory tree structure, and by one or more set parameters. Further, Snow does not teach using a query string to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 12 and 13 depend on the independent claim 11. As described above, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 12 and 13 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 21 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 21 comprises a research server configured to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Snow does not teach organizing and categorizing data items according to a specific node, as defined by a navigation path through the

directory tree structure, and by one or more set parameters. Further, Snow does not teach using a query string to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons the independent claim 21 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 22 and 23 depend on the independent claim 21. As described above, the independent claim 21 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 22 and 23 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 31 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within an electronic system. The network of devices of claim 31 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Snow does not teach organizing and categorizing data items according to a specific node, as defined by a navigation path through the directory tree structure, and by one or more set parameters. Further, Snow does not teach using a query string to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons the independent claim 31 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 32 and 33 depend on the independent claim 31. As described above, the independent claim 31 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 32 and 33 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 4-10, 14-20, 24-30, and 34-38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Snow in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,796 issued to Drucker et al. (hereafter "Drucker").

Claims 4-10 are dependent on the independent claim 1. Claims 14-20 are dependent on the independent claim 11. Claims 24-30 are dependent on the independent claim 21. Claims 34-

38 are dependent on the independent claim 31. As discussed above, the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 are each allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 4-10, 14-20, 24-30, and 34-38 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-38 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
HAVERSTOCK & OWENS LLP

Date: December 18, 2003

By: Jonathan O. Owens
Jonathan O. Owens
Reg. No. 37,902

Attorneys for Applicant